

Rockport Conservation Commission Policy on Proper Material(s) in Velocity Zone on Long Beach

INTRODUCTION & DESCRIPTION:

Long Beach is a federally designated barrier beach and dune along the south east coast of Rockport that has been developed upon with a seawall, summer cottages, patios, paths, and parking areas. Although this development seems to have reduced the capacity of the beach to act as a barrier beach and coastal dune, the Conservation Commission finds that the area still performs the critical protective functions which the state rules and regulations describe. The Rockport Conservation Commission is working to maximize the protective functions of barrier beaches and coastal dunes. .

A barrier beach by definition is (310 CMR 10.29) “a narrow low-lying strip of land generally consisting of coastal beaches and coastal dunes extending roughly parallel to the trend of the coast. It is separated from the mainland by a narrow body of fresh, brackish or saline water or a marsh system. A barrier beach may be joined to the mainland at one or both ends....”

Barrier beaches:

1. Are significant and important to storm damage prevention and flood control.
2. Protect landward areas, providing a buffer to storm waves and to sea levels elevated by storms.
3. Control wave action in such highly productive wetlands as salt marshes, estuaries, lagoons, salt ponds and fresh water marshes and ponds, which are in turn important to marine fisheries and protection of wildlife habitat.

A coastal dune by definition is (310 CMR 10.28) “any natural hill, mound or ridge of sediment landward of a coastal beach deposited by wind action or storm overwash. Coastal dune also means sediment deposited by artificial means and serving the purpose of storm damage prevention or flood control....” Coastal dunes provide much of the same protection as do barrier beaches.

In order to provide this protection:

1. Coastal dune volume must be maintained while allowing the coastal dune shape to conform to natural wind and water flow patterns.
2. Appropriate vegetation cover contributes to the growth and stability of coastal dunes with conditions favorable to sand deposition. See MA Coastal Zone Management website for coastal landscapes for specific landscaping: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/stormsmart-coasts-coastal-landscaping-in-massachusetts>

High wind and wave action during coastal storms can dislodge many types of materials regularly seen on the beach/dune. These items (boards, paving stones, patio tiles, etc.), which otherwise stay in place, often become projectiles that may damage cottages and other structures on the dune and/or beach and ultimately become storm debris, littering the shoreline, intertidal shores and beach or dune.

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POLICY:

With the above in mind, when an applicant comes before the Conservation Commission for a permit on a Long Beach property which is within the V-Zone (a velocity flood zone as defined by FEMA) to:

1. Repair >50% of the monetary value of the cottage (as required by the Building Department);
2. Repair and/or replace concrete/asphalt or other impervious walkways or patios or other hardscapes;
3. Construct or replace a deck;
4. Landscape the property; or
5. Do construction which will destroy existing vegetation.

The Commission will require that vegetation be replaced on the dune which will be compatible with the natural vegetative cover for a coastal dune. No new or replacement lawn grasses will be allowed. In addition, the Commission **shall** require that any concrete patios, walkways, and other hardscapes (as well as other permanent material) be removed from the beach and be replaced with **removable** patios, walkways and other hardscapes which may dissipate or absorb some of the energies of wind and wave action. Driveways/parking areas may be topped only with gravel and may not be enclosed with solid structures to hold gravel.

The following Materials allowed for these structures may be permitted **by application** to the Conservation Commission, provided that they adhere to the provisions of 310 CMR 10.28(3):

- Unconsolidated materials (such as gravel, pea stone, stone dust, crushed shell, etc.).
- Removable patios, mats and walkways (provided they are removed at season's end or at times of coastal storms).

REASONING:

The above policy is intended to help protect the dune and the home owners from storm damage and flooding. The Rockport Conservation Commission stands ready to work with all Long Beach cottage owners to best obtain our mutual goals.

For further information, please contact:

Conservation Agent
Rockport Conservation Commission
34 Broadway
Rockport, MA 01966
Phone: 978-546-5005
FAX: 978-546-3562
Website: www.rockportma.gov